

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SENV, CA

SUBJECT: GREAT LAKES LEVELS

1. DEPARTMENT (VINE) HAS RECEIVED FOLLOWING LETTER FROM INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION INDICATING COMMISSION'S INTEREST IN FURTHER REFERENCE ON GREAT LAKES LEVELS.

"THE INTERNATIONAL GREAT LAKES LEVELS BOARD IN ITS REPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION DATED DECEMBER 7, 1973, FOUND THAT PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR THE COMBINED REGULATION OF LAKES SUPERIOR, ERIE, AND ONTARIO EXHIBITED FAVORABLE BENEFIT-COST RATIOS. ONE OF THE PLANS, SEO 42P, SUGGESTED THE CONCEPT OF EMPLOYING THE BLACK ROCK CANAL TO INCREASE LAKE ERIE OUTFLOWS DURING PERIODS OF ABOVE AVERAGE SUPPLY. THE BOARD CONCLUDED THAT FURTHER STUDY WAS NEEDED OF ALTERNATIVES FOR REGULATING LAKE ERIE, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE FULL RANGE OF WATER SUPPLIES RECEIVED TO DATE.

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"THE COMMISSION HAS CONDUCTED THIRTEEN PUBLIC HEARINGS

THROUGHOUT THE GREAT LAKES BASIN IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES TO OBTAIN COMMENTS ON THE BOARD'S REPORT AND TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, FOR

INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS, AND FOR CONCERNED INDIVIDUALS TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON FURTHER REGULATION OF THE GREAT LAKES.

"BEFORE THE COMMISSION CAN FULLY ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE GOVERNMENTS' 1964 REFERENCE, ADDITIONAL STUDIES ARE REQUIRED. THE COMMISSION'S REPORT TO GOVERNMENTS, WHICH IS NOW IN PREPARATION, WILL EXPLAIN IN DETAIL THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND DATA. THE PURPOSE OF THIS LETTER IS TO INFORM THE TWO GOVERNMENTS IN ADVANCE OF THE REPORT OF THE NECESSITY FOR THE SPECIFIC FURTHER STUDIES INDICATED BELOW AND TO REQUEST SUPPORT FOR THESE STUDIES.

"DURING THE COURSE OF THE HEARINGS, THE NORTH CENTRAL DIVISION, CORPS OF ENGINEERS, PRESENTED A REGULATION PLAN, SEO-17P, AS AN EXTENSION OF THE STUDIES DOCUMENTED IN THE BOARD'S REPORT AND UTILIZING THE CONCEPT OF DIVERSION THROUGH THE BLACK ROCK CHANNEL. THE COMMISSION NOTES THAT NEITHER THE BOARD'S INVESTIGATION OF SEO-42P NOR THE CORPS REPORT ON SEO-17P ADEQUATELY COVER THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS NOR ADEQUATELY DEFINE THE NET BENEFITS OF SUCH REGULATION.

"RECORD WATER SUPPLIES DURING 1972-74 CAUSED VERY HIGH LEVELS ON LAKE ONTARIO AND IN THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER AND SEVERE EROSION AND FLOODING OF THE SHORELINE. THE PRESENT PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER LIMIT THE POSSIBLE VARIATION OF FLOWS ABOVE AND BELOW THOSE SELECTED FOR DESIGN PURPOSES. AN INVESTIGATION IS MANDATORY TO ASCERTAIN WHAT MEASURES, IF ANY, WOULD BE REQUIRED IN THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION OF THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER TO ACCOMMODATE INCREASED FLOWS DURING THE NORMAL NAVIGATION SEASON AND DURING THE VERY CRITICAL PERIOD OF FORMING AND STABILIZING AN ICE COVER.

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"IN RECENT YEARS THAT PORTION OF THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER LYING IN CANADA HAS ALSO BEEN SUBJECT TO PERSISTENT HIGH FLOWS AND ACCOMPANYING HIGH WATER LEVELS. THE COMMISSION IS AWARE THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OF CANADA AND QUEBEC HAVE UNDERTAKEN STUDIES WHICH ARE ADDRESSED TO THE PROBLEMS OF COPING WITH SUCH HIGH FLOWS. THE COMMISSION IS HOPEFUL THAT THE STUDIES WILL SATISFY ITS NEED FOR INFORMATION ON THE PRACTICABILITY OF IMPROVING THE REGULATION OF LAKE

ONTARIO AND PROVIDING ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY IN THE POSSIBLE REGULATION OF LAKE ERIE. THE AVAILABILITY OF THE SCOPE OF SUCH STUDIES, AND INFORMATION AS TO THE PROGRESS AND FINDINGS WOULD BE VERY USEFUL TO THE COMMISSION IN THE PLANNING OF ITS INVESTIGATION.

"THE COMMISSION INTENDS TO ESTABLISH A NEW BOARD, DRAWN FROM APPROPRIATE AGENCIES IN BOTH COUNTRIES TO CARRY OUT AND COORDINATE THE NECESSARY INVESTIGATIONS IN THE GREAT LAKES AND THE INTERNATIONAL RAPIDS SECTION OF THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER. IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THE WORK EXPEDITIOUSLY, THE COMMISSION REQUESTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES PROVIDE NOT ONLY ADEQUATE AND TIMELY FUNDING, BUT ALSO THE REQUIRED MANPOWER RESOURCES.

"IN THE EVENT THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS INDICATE TO THE COMMISSION A GENERAL AGREEMENT REGARDING THE ADDITIONAL STUDIES MENTIONED IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPHS, THE COMMISSION WILL INITIATE THE FURTHER INQUIRY AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

"A SIMILAR LETTER IS BEING SENT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS BY THE SECRETARY OF THE CANADIAN SECTION OF THE COMMISSION."

2. DEPARTMENT NOTES THAT CONSIDERABLE CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST HAS EXISTED IN REGARDS TO BOTH USE OF THE BLACK ROCK CANAL TO INCREASE LAKE ERIE OUTFLOWS AND FOR FURTHER STUDIES ON THE ST. LAWRENCE. EMBASSY WILL RECALL THAT CANADIANS HAVE DUCKED PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO STUDY PLANS OF REGULATION INVOLVING LAKE ERIE, AND HAVE BEEN NOTICEABLY SENSITIVE TO IJC OR US INVOLVEMENT IN THE SOLELY CANADIAN UNCLASSIFIED

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REACH OF THE ST. LAWRENCE.

3. REQUEST EMBASSY CONSULT INFORMALLY WITH EXTAFF AND EXPRESS THE FOLLOWING:

--DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THE PROPOSED STUDIES ARE IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH USG AND GOC.

--GOC SHOULD BE AWARE THAT CONGRESS, STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS, AND INTEREST GROUPS IN LAKE ERIE AND ONTARIO AREA HAVE FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED VIEW THAT STUDIES OF BOTH BLACK ROCK CANAL AND ST. LAWRENCE WOULD BE IN PUBLIC INTEREST.

--WE ARE AWARE OF CANADIAN DESIRE FOR CLOSER CONSULTATIONS

ON MATTERS CONCERNING THE IJC.

--WE WISH TO ASCERTAIN THEIR VIEWS ON THE IJC PROPOSAL AND
TO COORDINATE, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, SUBSTANTIVE
REPLIES TO THE COMMISSION.

4. DEPARTMENT WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE YOUR QUERYING EXTAFF
ON THE STATUS OF THE CANADA-QUEBEC STUDY OF THE ST.
LAWRENCE REFERRED TO IN IJC LETTER. INGERSOLL

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